

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3412
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AMEMBASSY DOHA
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: APER, BAGB, KU, BA
SUBJECT : AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE FOR THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

REF: STATE 212493

1. DESPITE THE HIGH COSTS OF HOUSING, THE SUMMER WEATHER, ETC.,
BAHRAIN CONTINUES TO BE, ON THE WHOLE, A PLEASANT PLACE TO LIVE.
THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, ON REGIONAL STANDARDS, IS DECIDEDLY
RELAXED AND CULTURE-RELATED HASSLES ARE UNUSUAL. AS DEPART-
MENT AWARE, MANY US BUSINESSES CONTINUE TO ESTABLISH THEIR REGIONAL
HEADQUARTERS HERE--IN VIEW OF THE RELATIVE EASE OF TRANSPORTATION,
GOOD COMMUNICATION AND THE DISPOSITION OF THE GOB TO FAVOR SUCH
REPRESENTATIONAL OFFICES.

2. IN USG TERMS, ALL THESE POSITIVE FACTORS PERTAIN IN VIEWING
BAHRAIN AS A REGIONAL BASE FROM WHICH TO OPERATE IN THE AREA.
THERE IS ONLY ONE PROBLEM IN THIS REGARD AND THAT IS THIS EMBASSY.
SINCE JUNE WE HAVE JUST BARELY BEEN KEEPING OUR INSTITUTIONAL
HEAD ABOVE WATER, ADMINISTRATIVELY--BOTH IN BUDGET AND FISCAL
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AND GENERAL SERVICES TERMS. ASIDE FROM THESE SERVICES, (WHICH

WILL BE ADDRESSED SEPTTEL IN DETAIL EARLY NEXT WEEK), WE HAVE THE ADDED COMPLICATION OF THE URGENT NECESSITY OF MAKING PLANS AND TAKING ACTION TO ESTABLISH OUR OWN COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY IN THE EMBASSY BY APRIL 1. AS OF THAT DATE, WE WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO USE THE NAVY'S COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (IN VIEW OF NAVY'S JUNE 1977 DEPARTURE FROM BAHRAIN). THIS TRANSITION, WE ASSUME, WILL ENTAIL MORE EQUIPMENT AND MORE STAFF.

3. WITH ALL THIS IN MIND, WE WOULD URGE THE DEPARTMENT NOT TO PLAN ON MANAMA AS THE BASE FOR THE PROPOSED REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE, AT LEAST UNTIL WE ARE MORE CONFIDENT OF OUR ABILITY TO COPE. AS FOR THE AID REGIONAL TECHNICAL SERVICES ATTACHE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/SECRETARY, WE WERE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT A FORMAL DECISION IN THEIR REGARD MAY BE MADE SOON. WE WELCOME THEIR ARRIVAL IN BAHRAIN, AS WE ARE JUST ABOUT TO EMBARK ON OUR AID TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HERE, WITH THE FIRST ADVISOR POSSIBLY ARRIVING TOWARD THE END OF SEPTEMBER. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR DEPARTMENT AND AID TO UNDERSTAND AND KEEP IN MIND OUR WEAK ADMINISTRATIVE SITUATION.

4. ON THE SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION OF THE ROLE OF A REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL

ATTACHE, OUR VIEW IS AS FOLLOWS: (A) THE OCCASIONAL, I.E., TWO OR THREE TIMES A YEAR, VISITS BY THE FAS' DAN SHEPPARD HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE AND ADEQUATE EXPRESSIONS OF USG INTEREST IN AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO BAHRAIN; (B) THAT A PERMANENTLY BASED ATTACHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH MUCH CLOSER WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL IMPORTERS OF FOOD THAN EMBASSY HAS HAD THE TIME AND EXPERTISE TO DO; (C) THAT DESPITE (B), THE TOTAL MARKET FOR FOOD IS VERY SMALL; AND (D), FINALLY, THAT IT PROBABLY IS THE CASE THAT A RESIDENT ATTACHE COULD AFTER A YEAR OR SO EFFECT A MARGINAL INCREASE OF AMERICAN EXPORTS OF FOOD PRODUCTS TO BAHRAIN. ON THE WHOLE, WE THINK A RESIDENT ATTACHE WOULD BE USEFUL BUT NOT CRUCIAL TO OUR FOOD EXPORT EFFORTS IN THE GULF. BURLEIGH

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